



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4  
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER  
61 FORSYTH STREET  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

AUG 15 2006

District Engineer  
Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers  
P.O. Box 1890  
Wilmington, NC 28502-1890  
Attention: Ms. Jenny Owens

**Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Shore Protection,  
West Onslow Beach and New River Inlet [Topsail Beach], NC, [dated  
June 2006] -- CEQ# 20060272, ERP# COE-E11060-NC**

Dear Colonel Pulliam:

Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102 (2)© of the National Environmental Policy Act, EPA, Region 4 has reviewed the subject document, an evaluation of the proposal by the Wilmington District [District] to pump approximately 3.22 million cubic yards of sand onto the eroding shoreline of Topsail Beach [a 5-mile reach which approximates the city limits]. While a number of alternatives [to include no-action] were examined, the locally developed plan which consists of a sand dune fronted by a 50-foot wide beach berm [constructed to 12- and 7- feet, respectively] was selected as the preferred option. To provide a degree of stability for the dune portion of the system a variety of native vegetation will be planted on both slopes. Six sites [located 3 to 5.5 miles offshore] are proposed as a source of sand for initial construction and subsequent periodic nourishment [ca. four years via hopper dredge]. The initial nourishment [pipeline dredge] is scheduled for completion in the Spring of 2011.

The EIS generally is thoughtfully developed regarding the overall effects of this proposal. However, we have identified some issues which bear on its long-term consequences as well as having generic relevance to similar beach nourishment measures proposed for other barrier/coastal features within the District. Our ongoing interests in this regard focus on certain of the underlying assumptions being made about this category of project. See the attached Detailed Comments for further discussion of these observations.

On the basis of our review a rating of EC-1 has been assigned. That is, we have some environmental concerns [EC] about the effects of the proposal, and there is sufficient information [1] in the document for us to make a reasoned appraisal of its overall impacts/ramifications. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If we can be of further assistance, Dr. Gerald Miller (404-562-9626) will serve as initial point of contact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Heinz J. Mueller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief  
NEPA Program Office